THE Nation Vindicated, FROM THE ASPERSIONS Cast on it in a Late PAMPHLET, INTITLED,

A Repreſentation of the Preſent State of Religion, with regard to the late exceſſive Growth of Infidelity, Hereſy and Profaneneſs, as it paſs'd the Lower Houſe of Convocation.

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PART II.

With ſome REMARKS on the Repreſentation of the *Iriſh* Convocation.

From the Prophets of Jeruſalem *is Profaneneſs gone forth into all the Land. Thus ſaith the Lord, Hearken not to the words of the Prophets, they make you vain: They ſpeak a Viſion of their own Heart, and not out of the Mouth of the Lord.*
Jer. xxiii. 15, 16.

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Where may be had the *Firſt Part.*

THE

Nation Vindicated, &c.

SINCE the First Part of the *Nation Vindicated* came out, when the Convocation was not sitting, and no one has thought fit to say any thing either in answer to it, or in defence of the Representation, I deferr'd printing this Second Part till the Sitting of the Convocation, that the Lower House might be the sooner oblig'd either to disown the Representation publish'd in their Name, or else to justify it; or if they could do neither, to ask God and Man Pardon for the many severe Reflections therein cast on the Church and Kingdom.

Having, in the First Part, shewn how little Reason the Representers had to charge the Church and Nation, since our Deliverance from Popery and Slavery, with wicked and immoral Practices, much less to complain of their excessive Growth; I shall now consider what they assert concerning as great an Increase of pernicious and destructive Opinions.

A Stranger, when he finds the Representers saying, 'It must be confess'd that all Endeavours, Pag. 5. which may hitherto have been us'd by publick or private Persons to stop the Growth of this Evil, have prov'd ineffectual: In the midst of such Discouragements, Infidelity hath taken deep root, and being cultivated with Care, hath spread its Branches wide, and shot up to an amazing height, and brought forth Fruit in great abundance;' would

from thence be apt to conclude, that a great part of the Nation are turn'd Infidels, and that there has been a great Conteſt between them and the Believers.

And he muſt likewiſe ſuppoſe, when he reads
Pag. 5. theſe words, 'We think our ſelves oblig'd to give 'ſome Account of the various Steps taken to un- 'dermine the Foundations of Chriſtianity, and to 'infect the Minds of your People with Atheiſm, 'Deiſm, Hereſy, and every pernicious and deſtruc- 'tive Error,' that many who have eſcap'd Atheiſm and Deiſm, were infected with Hereſy, or ſome pernicious or deſtructive Error, ſince various Steps have been taken to bring in every pernicious and deſtructive Error.

As this is the ſad and deplorable Condition theſe Gentlemen would have the World believe the Church of *England* is in, ſo one would expect, that to make out this ſurprizing Charge, they would have given a clear Account of what various Steps had been taken to promote Atheiſm, what *Deiſm* and what Hereſy; and then have proceeded in the ſame Method with relation to every other deſtructive Error: but inſtead of ranging things under diſtinct Heads, they write without any Order or Method, and mention ſo few Errors (tho they pretend to give, without any exception, ſome Account of every pernicious and deſtructive Error) that even by their own Repreſentation of theſe Times, one would think they were much better than the Primitive; in which, according to *Epiphanius*, there were no leſs than eighty diſtinct Sects of Heretics. Nay, St. *Auſtin* makes the Hereſies of thoſe days to be no leſs than eighty eight.

Relig. of Proteſt. chap. 6. p. 249. Mr. *Chillingworth* very juſtly obſerves, 'That 'who will accuſe any one Man, much leſs any great 'multitude of Men, of any great or horrid 'Crime, ſhould, in all Reaſon and Juſtice, take 'care, that the Greatneſs of his Evidence do equal 'if not exceed the Quality of the Crime.' Atheiſm, or the Disbelief of all Natural and Reveal'd Religion, being the higheſt Crime, it certainly requires more than ordinary Evidence: Y

do not find that these Representers, notwithstanding their Promise, have so much as offer'd to shew any one Step that has been taken to promote it. They indeed take it for granted that there are Atheists, by saying, 'We have reason to believe that Pag. 7.
'Mr. *Whiston* is supported in his Undertaking, and 'incourag'd to prosecute it, by the liberal Contributions, and insidious Applauses of those who are the 'determin'd Enemies of all Religion and Goodness.' But if there were any such Men, can we suppose they would be at any Expence, much less contribute liberally, to advance the Opinion of any one Set of Christians above another? since all Religions must be alike to such as are the determin'd Enemies of all Religion and Goodness.

It looks as if some Men were conscious of their own Inabilities to deal with this Adversary on the square; and therefore to prejudice others against him, and the Cause he is engag'd in, they assert this scandalous Report. Their usual Method is, to charge all that differ from them with *Atheism:* but when a Clergyman happens to have shewn so distinguishing a Zeal for promoting Religion, that this Charge would be too gross; then, as the next most invidious thing, they say, he is incourag'd and supported by the liberal Contributions of the determin'd Enemies of all Religion and Goodness. And considering how this poor Man has been already us'd, one may venture to say, without breach of Charity, That those are not the determin'd Friends of Religion and Goodness, who endeavour thus to blacken him. And how false their Charge is, may be seen in his Pag. 58.
Account of the Proceedings of the Convocation.

After the same manner these Representers treat the *Socinians*, and say, 'Their Pamphlets, when Pag. 7.
'first publish'd, were countenanc'd and recommended 'by the determin'd Enemies of all Religion and 'Goodness.' But supposing this to be true, yet if these Men recommended the *Socinian* Tracts, when first publish'd, and the *Socinians*, as these Gentlemen affirm, 'scatter'd their Poison as soon as the 'Dispute with the Church of *Rome* was ended,' these

Enemies

Enemies to all Religion must have been made so before the Revolution, which put an End to that Popish Controversy, because it must be a Work of Time to conquer the force of Education, and go directly counter to all the Notions of those they converse with; nay, abandon the common Sentiments of Mankind, and entertain such gross Absurdities, as make them become determin'd Enemies of all Religion and Goodness: and consequently this Supposition reflects on the Times before the Revolution which bred up such Monsters.

To do the Representers all the Justice imaginable, I shall take notice of whatever they suggest to have the least tendency to Atheism; and therefore I shall not here omit observing, that they complain,

Pag. 8. 'That the Necessity of all human Thoughts and 'Actions has been asserted; an Assertion, *say they*, 'which overturns the foundation of all Religion, 'whether natural or instituted, and renders all 'Notions of Good and Evil, of Rewards and Pu'nishments, whether in this Life or the next, 'groundless and vain.'

'Tis very strange, that the Consequence of an Assertion, which supposes that Rewards and Punishments necessarily influence Mens Actions, should be, that they had no effect on Mens Actions, but were vain and groundless.

Had Men a power to hate themselves, or were they at liberty to chuse Pain or Misery, knowing it to be such, the very worst thing that God himself could do to them, might then come to be their Choice: and the Foundation of all Religion, *viz.* Punishments and Rewards, would then be vain and groundless; because they would be as much at liberty to prefer such things, to which the greatest Punishments are annex'd, before those which have the greatest Rewards accompanying them, as if there had been no Rewards or Punishments.

But if Men are necessarily determin'd to love themselves, the Desire of getting Pleasure, and avoiding Pain, must as necessarily govern their Actions. None ever gave another any reason why he shou'd desire

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Happineſs, or endeavour to avoid Miſery: This is taken by every body to be inſeparable from human Nature; and as it is the only innate Principle in Man, ſo it muſt be the Spring of all his Actions, even in things that ſeem the moſt indifferent: and 'tis to this Source that his Reaſonings and Deliberations are owing, becauſe as neceſſarily as he deſires to avoid what is hurtful to him, and to obtain what is good, ſo neceſſarily does he doubt and deliberate; or in other words, weigh the Convenience or Inconvenience of an Action, till he is ſatisfy'd of the Conſequence of it; and then all Deliberation, there being no longer any room for it, neceſſarily ceaſes.

'Tis evident to every conſidering Perſon, that as Men can't help judging according to Appearances, ſo different Appearances neceſſarily produce different Judgments, and different Judgments different Wills; and that he who by Folly or Paſſion prefersthat which proves hurtful to him, chuſes it under the Notion of an appearing Good.

The difference between Men and Angels is not, that both alike do not neceſſarily deſire their own Good; but that the latter, by having their Judgments ſo much better inform'd, cannot commit ſuch Miſtakes as Men do. Nay, God himſelf, by the Excellency of his Nature, is neceſſarily determin'd always to will the beſt; and yet that does not hinder but that he is abſolutely free, becauſe nothing can prevent his acting as he pleaſes.

And Man is a free Agent, when he is not hinder'd from putting his Will in execution, tho his Will is the neceſſary Reſult of his Judgment.

To ſuppoſe the Will of Man is the Cauſe of it ſelf, is to make it to be before it was; and to ſuppoſe it had no Cauſe, is to make it ſelf-exiſtent and eternal: but if, like all other things which have a Beginning, it has a Cauſe, it muſt neceſſarily flow from that Cauſe, ſince the Cauſe and the Effect are inſeparable; or in other words, every Cauſe muſt produce its Effect, otherwiſe it cou'd not be a Cauſe; and what muſt produce its Effect, neceſſarily produces it.

If

If the Church of *England* had thought these Consequences were to be charg'd on the Doctrine of *Necessity*, she wou'd not in the least have favour'd it, by saying that *Predestination to Life is the everlasting Purpose of God, constantly decreed before the Foundation of the World, to bring those he has chosen in Christ to everlasting Salvation, as Vessels made to Honour.* And in the Apology at the end of our Bibles printed by the Queen's Printer in 1589. (with which the * *Suffrages of our Divines at the Synod of Dort* agree) it is declar'd, That *some are Vessels of Wrath ordain'd to Destruction, as others are Vessels of Mercy prepar'd to Glory.* And what difference is there between such Actions and necessary Actions, since whatsoever God has thus predestinated, ordain'd, or decreed, must necessarily come to pass?

Artic. 17.

* *Printed at* London 1629.

In Queen *Elizabeth*'s Reign the Church appear'd so zealous for this Doctrine, that by direction of the Bishops 'the *incorrigible Free-will Men* among the 'inferiour Clergy were to be sent into some Castle 'in *North-Wales* or *Wallingford*, there to live on 'their Labour and Exercise, and none suffer'd to 'resort to 'em but their Keepers, till they were 'found to repent of their Errors.'

Strype's *Annals*, Ch. 17.

What can be a greater Demonstration, that there have not been any Steps since the Revolution taken in favour of Atheism, if this is all that these Gentlemen, after no doubt a most diligent Search, can produce to justify so terrible a Charge? in which none is more concern'd than the most Orthodox Dr. *South*, who says, 'The whole Train of E-'vents is laid before-hand.——God does not first 'wait what the Creature will do, and then frame 'his Decrees.——What he once intends, he intended 'from all Eternity.——They ought to have resolv'd 'the Necessity of all inferior Events into the free 'Determination of God.'

First Vol. of Serm. p. 381, &c.

P. 385.

Tho these Representers have not shewn that there has been any one Pamphlet publish'd in favour of Atheism; yet the *Irish* Convocation affirm, 'That 'many of those Atheistical Books wrote and dis-'pers'd in a Neighbour Nation, are brought over 'hither,

Representation, *p.* 5.

'hither, and ſome reprinted here.—By this means, 'ſay they, too many are inclin'd too ſtrongly to 'ſet up the Light of Nature for their only Guide, 'and ſatisfy their Conſciences with a Religion pure-'ly moral.' It's ſomething ſtrange, that Books deſign'd to deſtroy all Conſcience and extirpate the Light of Nature, and level'd againſt all Religion, that which is purely moral, as well as that which is not ſo, ſhou'd ſatisfy Mens Conſciences with a Religion purely moral: One wou'd not ſure expect this Effect from Books, which they ſay *are with great Artifice calculated to expoſe all that is accounted Sacred among us to Contempt and Scorn.* 'Tis to be hoped, they think there's ſome Sacredneſs in things purely moral.

And now I ſhall examine whether there is more Truth in what is ſaid of the Disbelief of Reveal'd Religion having ſo widely ſpread it ſelf.

The Repreſenters ſay, 'The Doctrines reveal'd Pag. 7.
'by our Saviour were ſpoken of with profane Le-'vity and Contempt, his Humiliation and Suffer-'ings were derided, his Perſon was blaſphem'd, 'and treated with as great Indignity and Scorn, as 'when he ſtood at the Judgment-Seat of *Pilate.*'

I ſhou'd not have gueſs'd who is here aim'd at, did not ſeveral High-Church Pamphlets charge part of this Blaſphemy on the Author of the *Growth of Deiſm.*

Nothing certainly can be more unjuſt than to charge a Man with maintaining an Aſſertion, when he only brings it in as an Objection in order to confute it. If this Method were fair, moſt of the Clergy might be made either Atheiſts or Deiſts; ſince not only in their Sermons they mention what thoſe Men are ſuppos'd to ſay, but many of them have writ long Conferences and Dialogues, wherein they pretend to ſtate their Objections at large.

This Reverend Author imputes the Riſe of Deiſm in this Nation to the Conduct of High-Church Prieſts, under the Adminiſtration of *Laud*; and ſays, 'That ſome of thoſe Gentlemen, who in their Pag. 3, 4.
Travels into Popiſh Countries had perceiv'd that

'Popery in all its Branches was only a Device of 'the Prieſthood to advance their Wealth, Honour, 'and Power; and upon their Return ſeeing with 'thoſe Eyes lately clear'd up in *Italy* and *France*, 'that the Biſhops here were then ſetting up a Papal 'Power, and that the Kirk claim'd no leſs, and 'that the Controverſy at the bottom was not, 'whoſe Religion was beſt, but only what Set of 'Prieſts ſhould make the beſt Market of the mere 'Layman:' This he ſuppoſes prejudic'd them not only againſt the Clergy, but even againſt the Religion they taught. And then, according to the Cuſtom of Divines, he brings in a Deiſt arguing after this manner: ''Tis not impoſſible that the antient 'Clergy might be poſſeſs'd with the ſame Spirit of 'Pride which has prevail'd over the modern. If 'thoſe Writings which they call Holy Scriptures are 'of their ſide, as they all ſay they are, I make no 'doubt but they were of their own Inventions; 'and if Jeſus Chriſt laid the foundation of *thoſe* 'Powers which both Popiſh and Proteſtant Clergy 'claim to themſelves from under him, the old *Ro-* 'mans did him right, in puniſhing him with the 'Death of a Slave.'

This Divine ſhou'd have made his Deiſt ſpeak with more Decency: but want of that is not a ſufficient ground to charge on him the Sentiments of the Deiſt; eſpecially ſince he had juſt before demonſtrated the Truth of the Chriſtian Religion, and more than once aſſures his Deiſt, if he would but read the Bible, the Prejudice he had conceiv'd againſt it on the account of the Conduct of the Clergy would ſoon vaniſh: or if he thought that too much, he deſires him to read the Character given of it by an undeſigning Layman, Sir *M. Hales*; which Cha-
P. 15. racter he there ſets down at large, and then he ſhews that this great and good Man had much the ſame Sentiments concerning the Cauſe of the Growth of Infidelity.

Were this Deiſt now alive, had he ſeen his Ob-
P. 221. jection mention'd in *Sacheverel*'s Tryal, as the blaſphemous Opinion of the Author himſelf, and that there-

therefore the Church was in danger; or had he ſeen a Body of Men, upon no better ground than this, affirm that there have been Books written, wherein *Chriſt's Humiliation and Sufferings*, &c. wou'd this have taken off his Prejudices, eſpecially if he had obſerv'd that the only Men who had treated our Saviour's Sufferings after a moſt unworthy manner, were not at all animadverted upon? I mean thoſe Reverend Divines, who have made the Crime of crucifying the Son of God to have been equal'd, and in ſome caſes exceeded by that of the late Regicides.

I do not wonder this Reverend Divine is thus treated, when I find him ſaying, 'Did not Sir *R. H.* P. 16. 'lately write a * Treatiſe, wherein with great 'Learning and accurate Judgment he diſtinguiſhes 'betwixt Religion and Prieſtcraft? and was he not 'treated for it with a true Prieſtly Inſolence and 'Malice in the Pulpit at *Whitehall*, by *A.* one of 'their Majeſty's Chaplains, and repreſented as a 'Scorner and Atheiſt, becauſe he ſcorn'd to ſubmit 'to any Religion but that of Chriſt's Inſtitution?'

* *Hiſtory of Religion.*

To ſhew the great Increaſe of Unitarianiſm, which they ſuppoſe to be one chief Cauſe of the late exceſſive Growth of Infidelity, they ſay, 'That P. 6. 'in defiance to the Laws, they (the *Socinians*) ſet 'up for making Proſelytes by a multitude of wicked Books and Pamphlets, which for ſome years 'they diſpers'd from the Preſs without Controul 'or Diſcouragement.'

The few *Socinian* Tracts ſold ſo very ill, that they would not pay for their Printing; and ſince the Death of Mr. *Firmin* (who was at the expence of printing them) there has ſcarce been a Pamphlet of that nature publiſh'd. And I might here add, that moſt of theſe Pamphlets were ſaid to be wrote by a High-Church Prieſt of the Dioceſs of *L---d--n.*

But theſe Gentlemen add, 'They at laſt pro- P. 6. 'ceeded ſo far, as even to ſet up a Religious Aſſembly, wherein Divine Worſhip was publickly perform'd in a way agreeable to the Principles of the

'Unitarians, and weekly Sermons preach'd in de-
'fence of them.'

This can only relate to a Lecture which Mr. *Emlyn* kept for some time after his Return from *Ireland*; where he was fin'd a Thousand Pounds, and suffer'd above two years Imprisonment, for preaching a Doctrine (if we may believe Mr. *Whiston*, who has publish'd an intire Copy of the Words charg'd on him in his Indictment) which is but little different from what Bishop *Bull*, and with him our present Convocation, begin freely to assert: yet such Dread had People of any thing that look'd like *Socinianism*, that notwithstanding the great Esteem they had (as all that know him must have) for his eminent Piety, Probity, and Parts, he was oblig'd to drop his Lecture, tho in his preaching he avoided meddling with that Controversy; of which at the bottom of the Page there is a Certificate under his Hand *.

Account of the Convocation's Proceedings, p. 32.

Mr. *Whiston* has not only told the World that Mr. *Emlyn* utterly deny'd the Fact, but said, 'With 'what face cou'd this Author affirm such a thing, 'and endeavour to draw in a whole Convocation to 'affirm the same thing, tho entirely false and 'groundless?' People expected that the Representers, in order to confound these two Hereticks, and to put a stop to Heresy, wou'd before now have produc'd a Cloud of Witnesses to justify what they said of this Unitarian Assembly.

Ibid. p. 57.

Who can believe that such eminent Divines as Dr. *Atterbury*, Dr. *Smalridge*, Dr. *Gastrell*, who b

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* *These are to certify, That during the time of my Preaching in* London, *I preach'd no Sermon in opposition to the Doctrine of the Trinity, or in defence of the Principles of the Unitarians; but made it my business to persuade Men to Practical Religion. Nor was there any thing in our Worship but any Trinitarian might have join'd in, if he cou'd be satisfy'd with the antient Creed, call'd the Apostles, which was constantly repeated among us.*

October 20. 1711. Tho. Emlyn.

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being benefic'd in *London* must know the truth of this matter, cou'd be concern'd in giving this Account?

The Representers complain, 'That the Scheme of 'Morality propos'd by the Gospel was undervalu'd, 'and said not to be beyond the Reach of human 'Invention.' And in *Sacheverell*'s Tryal, these words are quoted out of the *Growth of Deism*: 'One of 'my old Acquaintance (a Deist) always thought 'the Moral part of the Bible very good, but then he 'also thought that by the Strength of his own Rea-'son he could have wrote as good.' But 'tis not the Divine who must answer for this, but the Deist; who afterwards says, when upon his reading the Bible he had overcome the Prejudices that the Conduct of the Priests had made him conceive against Religion, 'That he was convinc'd he was indebted to Revela-'tion more than he thought; and that considering 'what a profound Respect the *Jews* paid to their 'Spiritual Rulers, he plainly saw there was need 'enough of Miracles to beat down their Prejudices, 'and make them listen to those excellent Morals 'Christ gave them; but that no Miracles are strong 'enough to prevail over the Priests or Priest-ridden 'People to become Proselytes to the Doctrine of 'Universal Love and Charity.'

P. 7.

P. 211.

Growth of Deism, p. 22.

Our Divines do in effect say the same thing with this Deist, when they affirm that the Moral Law is not arbitrary, but immutable and eternal, and consequently the same before, as well as after the coming of Christ, and at all times discoverable by all Mankind; otherwise it cou'd not be a Law to all Mankind. And this is no new Doctrine of our Divines, but what the Primitive Fathers taught.

Celsus, a most bitter Enemy of the Christians, thinking, as *Origen* tells us, to reflect on the Christian Morality, says, 'There's nothing new in it, 'nothing but what was in common with the Philo-'sophers.' But *Origen* turn'd his Argument upon him, and says, 'If we admit the Judgments of 'God to be just, we must acknowledg that there 'can be no ground for the Punishment of Sinners, 'unless

Orig. cont. Celf. lib. 1.

'unleſs the common Conceptions of all Men are 'ſufficient to give them a ſound Underſtanding in 'the Duties of Morality; and therefore it is not 'to be thought ſtrange, that thoſe things, which 'God has taught us by the Prophets and our Sa-'viour, were implanted by him in the Minds of all 'Men, that ſo every Man having the Intention and 'Meaning of the Law written in his own Heart, 'ſhou'd be left without Excuſe before the Divine 'Tribunal.'

I have mention'd *Origen* rather than any other Father, becauſe a * Celebrated Divine, the better to extol his Character, has ſtrangely depreſs'd that of all other Chriſtians who liv'd before and in his time, ſaying, 'He was ſuch an Honour to the 'Church and Profeſſion, that he wip'd off a very 'popular Objection, That none but Fools were 'Chriſtians.' Had any but a High-Churchman made thus free with 'em, he had afforded theſe Gentlemen plentiful Matter of Harangue.

* *Mr.* Reeves, *in his Notes on the Commentary of* Vincent. Lirin. §. 32.

Were it true, that Infidelity had ſpread it ſelf ſo wide as theſe Repreſenters wou'd have us believe, they had no need to endeavour to perſuade the World that theſe things had been ſaid by a number of Lay-Infidels, in order to infect the Minds of the People, when in truth they are all taken out of one ſingle Author, and him a Clergyman too, who mentions them as Objections of Deiſts, not with a deſign to promote, but confound Infidelity.

P. 7. Theſe Gentlemen complain, 'That the *Moſaick* 'Account of the Creation has been repreſented as 'mere Allegory and Fable.'

Tho it was the Opinion of the Primitive Fathers, that the Account of the Creation was Allegorical; and even in the fifth Century St. *Auſtin*, who in after-Ages was eſteem'd the Standard of Orthodoxy, is ſo far from thinking that the *Moſaick* Account of it is to be underſtood literally, that he maintains * *the whole World was created in an inſtant, and that the ſix days Labour refers to the different Degrees of Knowledg in Angels:* yet I believe there are none now ſo abſurd, as to be govern'd by the Authority

* Tom. 3. lib. imperf. de Gen. ad lit. c. 7. & lib. 4. ad lit. c. 31, 33, 34.

Authority of the Fathers in this caſe. And therefore I can't gueſs whom the Repreſenters point at, tho ſome think this is level'd againſt Dr. *Burnet* of the *Charter-houſe*, who indeed ſuppoſes that the Dialogue between *Eve* and the Serpent is to be interpreted allegorically. But one wou'd think theſe Gentlemen cou'd not blunder ſo unmercifully, as to miſtake the Fall for the Creation; or ſo far forget themſelves as to mean him, when at the diſtance of a few Pages they cou'd not but have his *Theory of the Earth* in view, when they ſay, 'We are not inſenſible how P. 16.
'much Religion has ſuffer'd by the Attempts made
'to ſhew how all the Steps taken in that great
'Work of Omnipotence, the Creation of the
'World, were to be accounted for by the known
'Laws of Motion; and that the Deſtruction of
'the Deluge might in like manner be explain'd:
'for the Tendency of ſuch Attempts has been to
'confine the Thoughts of Men to ſecond Cauſes,
'and to intimate how little the Wiſdom of God
'was concern'd in the making the World.'

If this be a juſt Reflection, it relates only to the Clergy themſelves, ſince no Layman has attempted to explain either the Creation or the Deluge.

Divines, when they have no particular View, are ſo far from ſuppoſing that ſtudying the Works of the Creation intimate how little the Wiſdom of God was concern'd in making the World, that they affirm with the Apoſtle, That *the inviſible things of* Rom. 1.
God from the Creation of the World are clearly ſeen, 20.
being underſtood by the things that are made, even his Eternal Power and Godhead: and that the more we ſtudy the Creation, the more we ſhall admire the Wiſdom of the Creator. And there's ſcarce a Sermon againſt Atheiſm, but's full of Arguments for the Being of a God, drawn from the Works of the Creation. Nay, they ſay that 'tis ſcarce poſſible for a Man who reflects juſtly, to forbear being in the higheſt Raptures at the Divine Wiſdom, when he contemplates any of its ſtupendous Works; and that 'tis only true of the Tricks of Juglers, that the leſs they are underſtood, the more they

are

are admir'd. After this manner Divines us'd to argue; but now, it ſeems, to ſhew that Mathematicks, Reaſon, and Philoſophy do all atteſt to Revelation, and that the grand Changes mention'd in Scripture are rationally to be ſolv'd in agreement with the Sacred Accounts, and that they do neceſſarily ſuppoſe an All-wiſe Providence, is become a Mark of Infidelity.

P. 8. The Repreſenters ſay, 'That the Grounds of 'believing the Goſpel in this Age, have been repre-'ſented as leſs firm and certain, by a pretended Cal-'culation of Degrees, according to which the Cre-'dibility related in Scripture muſt every Age de-'creaſe.'

This relates to the Reverend Mr. *Craig*'s *Principia Mathematica Theologiæ Chriſtianæ*; who there pretends to demonſtrate that the Certainty of Facts which depend on human Tradition (as all do where a Man has not a Divine Revelation himſelf) muſt leſſen in proportion to their diſtance from the time when they were done. And I am told by good Judges, that there's little difference between the Mathematicks of this Reverend Divine and what is printed in the Philoſophical Tranſactions about the Credibility of human Teſtimony, ſaid to be written by Dr. *Hooper*, one of our preſent Biſhops. But Experience ſhows us that this Reverend Divine, notwithſtanding his pretended Demonſtration, is much miſtaken, and that Length of Time does not leſſen the Credibility of Sacred Matters. As for inſtance, in the primitive time nothing was more diſputed amongſt the different Sects, than what Books were genuine Scripture, and what not; yet there's now none, either Orthodox or Heretick, that ſo much as queſtions any of thoſe ſmaller Epiſtles, which even in *Euſebius*'s time were generally look'd on as doubtful. Nay, the Book of the *Revelations*, tho rejected by the Council of *Laodicea* in 360, and not admitted till the eighth Century by any Council, is now publickly diſown'd by no one; tho one wou'd think indeed the Reverend Dr. *South* cou'd not believe it to be of Divine Authority,

Phil. Tran. abr. vol. 3. p. 2. Sect. 25. p. 662.

Euſ. l. 3. c. 25.

when

when he ſays, 'That 'tis a Book, that perhaps the 'more 'tis ſtudy'd the leſs it is underſtood, as 'generally either finding a Man crack'd, or making 'him ſo.' South's *Serm.* Vol. II. p. 467.

Hitherto we have met with none but Divines who promote the Cauſe of Deiſm; and tho the Repreſenters go as far as *Amſterdam* for a Reaſon of the exceſſive Growth of Infidelity at home, yet ſtill 'tis a Divine they pitch on, when they ſay, 'That the 'Inſpiration of the Holy Writ was ſo explain'd, as 'amounted to a Denial of it:' for they here, I preſume, mean the Author of the *Letters concerning Inſpiration.* He tells us indeed, that the Hiſtory of the Old Teſtament is only Abſtracts taken out of larger Records, which in many places it refers to: And that to relate Matters of Fact of their own knowledg, nothing more than Sincerity was requir'd in the Writers of the Goſpels. P. 8.

When the Deiſts argue, if there be not an exact Agreement between the Facts related in the Canonical Books, that the Holy Ghoſt, who varies not a tittle in what he relates, cou'd not be the Author of 'em; our Divines anſwer with relation to the Goſpels, That the Differences which appear in the minute Circumſtances of the Facts related in them, are a proof that the Writers of the Goſpels did not invent what they ſay, or write by concert; ſince if they had, they wou'd ſo well have adjuſted things, as not to have differ'd in the moſt minute Circumſtances: which is in effect ſaying the ſame thing as is here condemn'd in the *Amſterdam* Divine.

The Repreſenters complain, 'That the natural 'Immortality of the Soul was oppos'd as a Vulgar 'and groundleſs Error.' P. 8.

This may be a Fault in Philoſophy; but how it ſhou'd encourage Infidelity more than owning the natural Mortality of the Body, I can't ſee. They indeed may be truly charg'd with Infidelity, who think that God's ſaying of a thing is not a ſufficient Proof of its Truth, except we have recourſe to vain Philoſophy to help him out.

What can savour more of Infidelity, than not to be satisfy'd with the words of Truth, except other Proofs drawn from the nature of things concur with it? Is not this highly to weaken the Evidence of all those Matters that depend wholly on the Promises of God, and to suppose that the Bulk of Mankind, to whom all the Metaphysical Arguments for the natural Immortality of the Soul must appear mere Jargon, can't have a sufficient Proof of their Souls being immortal hereafter?

I think it is highly uncharitable to condemn those of Infidelity, who presume not *to be wise above what is written*; and who, because the Scripture affirms, 2 Tim. 2. 6. that *Christ hath abolish'd Death, and brought Life and Immortality to Light thro the Gospel*, dare not say in opposition to it, That the Light of Nature, antecedent to Divine Revelation, has brought the natural Immortality of the Soul to Light: especially when they see those who maintain this, divided about the Nature of the Soul, some making it an *extended*, some an *unextended* Being; some saying 'tis in a Place, others in a *Ubi*; some affirming 'tis in a Place *circumscriptivè*, others only *definitivè*: which is as intelligible as their saying, *'tis All in All*, and *All in every Part*.

Divines generally maintain, that Preservation is a continu'd Creation, and that it as much requires an Omnipotent Power to keep things in being, as at first to give them an Existence. After this how can they affirm any Creature to be naturally immortal? much more how can they condemn any one of promoting Infidelity, who thinks there's an infinite difference between the Nature of a Creature and the Creator, and believes the Scripture calls God the 1 Tim. 1. 17. *Only Immortal*, because He alone is naturally so?

We have hitherto met with nothing to justify this heavy Charge of a late excessive Growth of Indelity, but now we may expect wonderful Discoveries; otherwise the Representers wou'd not usher in what they are going to say, with this following pom- P. 9. pous Exclamation: 'With what Industry and Zeal, 'by what dark and subtle Methods this Mystery

'of

'of Iniquity has been carry'd on, we beg leave to 'repreſent.'

And then they ſay, 'That Contributions have Pag. 10.
'been made, that Combinations of Men have been 'form'd for promoting the Cauſe of Infidelity. We 'have heard, nor do we doubt (add theſe charita-'ble Perſons) of the Truth of it; having obſerv'd 'that the Meaſures taken to advance Irreligion have 'been in many reſpects ſo uniform, that they ſeem 'to have been concerted, and not to have ſprung 'merely from the caſual Contradiction (*meaning ca-'ſual Conſent*), and divided Efforts of particular Per-'ſons, but rather to have been the Reſult of united 'Counſels and Endeavours.' And to make out all this, they affirm, tho without offering the leaſt Proof, that ſeveral Facts were done by theſe Factors for Infidelity. So that the whole Proof on which this heavy Charge is built, amounts to no more than this Popiſh Circle: *Theſe things have been done by the Combination and united Counſels of Infidels, becauſe they act by Combination and united Counſels; and they act by Combination and united Counſels, becauſe they had done theſe things.*

This however ſhall not hinder me from fully examining what they ſay has been done by Men combin'd together for promoting the Cauſe of Infidelity. 'They have, ſay they, reprinted together in 'the moſt contracted manner many looſe and li-'centious Poems, in order to their being purchas'd 'more cheaply, and diſpers'd more eaſily; and have 'by that means convey'd the Infection to great 'numbers of Men, who wou'd otherwiſe have lain 'without the reach of it.'

Charity, which thinks no Ill, will never ſuppoſe that to be done by Numbers combin'd together with ſo very wicked a Deſign, when the Matter may lie no deeper than that ſome Hedg-Printer, who mere-ly to get a Penny is ready to print an inflaming Sermon as well as a baudy Poem, ſet his Preſs to work, and reprinted theſe looſe Poems. And this one may conclude from the wretched manner in which thoſe Poems are printed: but if the thing

lies deeper, and this muſt be done with ſome politick Deſign, the queſtion will be, who are the moſt intereſted to do this.

Now 'tis certain, that looſe and licentious People content themſelves with whatever Religion the Chance of Education has thrown on them; they are never thoughtful or ſerious enough to have ſo ſtrict a Regard for Truth, as to be at the pains to examine into the grounds of the Religion they are educated in. On the contrary, they not only have an implicit Belief for whatever their licens'd Guides tell them, but think that a blind Zeal for their Intereſt, and the moſt uncharitable Treatment of all who are not as Prieſt-ridden as themſelves (which is all that they mean by being for the Church) may attone for want of Morality. And therefore if theſe looſe Poems were publiſh'd by a Confederacy, 'tis moſt likely to be done by wicked and deſigning Prieſts, who dread nothing more than Godly and Virtuous Laymen.

The ſame View that cou'd engage a Set of Men to affirm after ſo ſolemn a manner, that Licentiouſneſs had of late overſpread the Face of the Church and Kingdom, might have tempted them to publiſh theſe looſe Poems, and then make the publiſhing 'em an Argument of the Licentiouſneſs of the Age, and a Pretence for reſtraining the Preſs, and gaining more Power for the Clergy; the ſole End and Deſign of this pious Repreſentation.

If ſome Men did not find their Intereſt in encouraging Licentiouſneſs, we ſhou'd not meet with ſuch univerſal Complaints of the Youth being corrupted and debauch'd in thoſe places, where their deluded Parents expect they ſhall be confirm'd in that Innocence they uſually carry thither.

That a Batchelor of Divinity, if he has no Cure of Souls, is capable of printing looſe Poems, appears from the Confeſſion of the Reverend Mr *Barnes*; who, in excuſe for publiſhing *Anacreon*'s drunken and baudy Songs, ſays, *He is only a Batchelor of Divinity, without Cure of Souls:* And Mr. *Le Clerc* ſo far accepts of his Excuſe, as to ſay, *He thinks*

thinks him more innocently employ'd than many of his Brethren. And I am told by those who read such Poems as these Gentlemen complain of, That there are not a few amorous and wanton, not to say bawdy Poems, publish'd by such Reverend Divines as have not Mr. *Barnes*'s Excuse. Biblioth. Choisie, *Tom.* 11. *P.* 339, 340.

The Representers, as a farther Proof of a Confederacy to carry on the Cause of Infidelity, likewise say, 'That by Mock-Catechisms fram'd in a 'light manner upon vain and trifling Subjects, they 'have endeavour'd to depreciate those excellent 'Summaries of the Christian Faith, by which a 'right Sense of Religious Truths is first instill'd 'into the Minds of Children.' P. 10.

These Mock-Catechisms were, as I understand, a sort of *Mob-Spectators*, design'd to expose the Tricks and Cheats of some Men, which they as constantly practis'd, as if they had been taught 'em in their Catechism. And there's no reason to imagine the *Grubstreet* Scriblers who wrote 'em, any more design'd to depreciate the Church-Catechism, than the News-Writers do the *Confirmation* us'd by our Church, when that word is mention'd in their Papers: Tho I can't say so of those who teach the Children at the *Charity-Schools*, not the Church's, but one *Lewis*'s Catechism; and, contrary to Law, make 'em repeat it in the Church.

Had the Clergy, when those Mock-Catechisms were cry'd about the streets, imagin'd that this was the Result of the united Counsels of Infidels, in order to depreciate the excellent Summaries of the Christian Faith; wou'd none of 'em have taken the least notice of it? And are not these Representers Men of deep Penetration, who could so long after make this notable Discovery? which some think had been a Secret still, had it not been for the sake of a Pamphlet, entitled, *A New Catechism*; which is not wrote on loose or vain Subjects, but to defend Religion against some of the most irreligious Men that ever were, if what is there charg'd on 'em be true; of which I think there can be little reason to doubt, since neither they who are most concern'd to shew

that

that they have not been misrepresented, have undertaken to clear themselves, or any others for 'em, as might easily have been done, if those most profane and blasphemous Sayings (on which the Authors lay as great a stress as if they were Summaries of the Christian Faith) were not fairly cited.

P. 10. 'The Factors for Infidelity (say the Representers) 'have republish'd and collected into Volumes, Pieces 'written long ago on the side of Infidelity; which 'wou'd have lain altogether neglected and forgot- 'ten, without such a Revival.'

And here I can't but observe, that notwithstanding the great Clamour these Gentlemen make about the late excessive Growth of Infidelity, we see they themselves own that there were Pieces which make Volumes, written long ago (many of them by Eminent Divines) on the side of Infidelity. And 'tis a sign the People of this Age are not so fond of Infidelity, if those Pieces (*viz.* the first and second Parts of the *Phenix*) wou'd have lain neglected and forgotten, had they not been republish'd, not by Men combin'd together in the Cause of Infidelity, but by *John Dunton* Bookseller, whom none ever in the least suspected of Infidelity. And had the Representers, before they made this uncharitable and false Charge, inquir'd into this matter, Mr. *Dunton* would no doubt readily have told 'em what I now produce under his Hand.

IT being generally thought that the following Words in the Representation of the Lower House of Convocation, [They have republish'd, and collected into Volumes, Pieces written long ago on the side of Infidelity, which wou'd have lain altogether neglected and forgotten, without such a Revival] *do refer to the two Volumes of the* Phenix; *I who was the Projector of that Design, do hereby certify, that I had no other end in that Undertaking, than preserving curious and valuable Pieces, without any design to promote Infidelity, or to serve one Party more than another: of which the* Burden of Issachar, *in the second Volume, which was written against the* Scotch *Presby-*

Presbyterians, is a plain Instance. And I take this occasion to inform the Reader, that the Preface to the Second Volume, which gives an Account of my Design, as well as of each Tract in that Volume, was written by the Ingenious and Reverend Mr. Christopher Obryen, *a Nonjuring Clergyman. Witness my Hand this 6th of* March, 1711.

JOHN DUNTON.

'These Infidels have, say the Representers, pro- P. 10.
'cur'd Abstracts and Commendations of their own
'profane Writings, and probably drawn up by
'themselves, to be inserted in foreign Journals, and
'then have translated them into the *English* Tongue,
'and publish'd them here at home, in order to add
'the greater weight to their wicked Opinions.'

This, tho spoken of profane Writings in general, to make the World believe there have been no small number of such Abstracts, can only relate to Monsieur *Le Clerc*'s Abstract *of the Rights of the Christian Church*; and no one will wonder that these Men shou'd think it impossible for a Priest to commend a Book written against Priestcraft, except he was hir'd. But, however, they ought to have consider'd, that general Rules are not without exception, and that they were speaking of a very strange sort of Priest, one who chuses to starve in a Country the freest from Priestcraft, that he may undisturb'd write against it, rather than join with any Set of High-Church Priests in promoting it; tho a Man of his Parts, Learning and Industry, cou'd he so far prostitute his Conscience, might obtain from any Set of them what Terms he pleases.

I cou'd not think Monsieur *Le Clerc*, considering the Protestants abroad seem to understand the Representers, and what they are driving at, better than most People at home, wou'd have done them the Honour to take notice of such a Reflection; but he declares, 'I take this Opportunity to undeceive Biblioth.
'certain Persons who have given out in *England*, Choisie,
'that they who sent me the Book, entitled, *The* Tom. 23.
'*Rights of the Christian Church* (which has made so p. 235,
'great 236.

'great a noiſe in *England*) had given me a Reward 'for the notice I take of it, that there never was a 'greater Falſhood; and I can ſafely proteſt as an 'honeſt Man, and before God, that for making 'mention of that, or any other Book, I had nei-'ther Promiſe nor Reward: they who have pub-'liſh'd the contrary, have either publiſh'd a Lye of 'their own Invention, or elſe they have been im-'pos'd on. I can further affirm, I know of no 'Perſon that ever ſent me a Book out of *England*, 'with a Deſign to publiſh again my Extract of it 'in the *Engliſh* Tongue.'

To ſhew what regard the Repreſenters have for Truth, and how much they ſcorn to impoſe on their Readers, I take the liberty to inſert another Certificate.

WHEREAS it is ſuggeſted in a late Repreſentation, that ſome Authors have tranſlated Abſtracts and Commendations of their own profane Writings, inſerted in foreign Journals, back into the Engliſh *Tongue; and having ſufficient ground to conclude, that thereby is meant the Extract of the* Rights of the Chriſtian Church, *I think my ſelf obliged, in regard to Truth and Juſtice, to ſatisfy the World, that the Author of the* Rights *was ſo far from having any hand in the Tranſlation of that Extract, that to the beſt of my remembrance he knew nothing of it till it was publiſh'd; and I verily believe he had at that time no acquaintance either with the Gentleman who tranſlated it, or with him who wrote the Preface to it. Witneſs my Hand,* March 8. 1711.

JOHN DARBY.

In the Judgment of all Caſuiſts, they who aſſert a thing as true, which they do not know to be ſo, are equally guilty of a Lye, as if the thing were falſe; becauſe they wou'd impoſe on the World, as if they knew that to be true which they do not know to be ſo: Which neceſſary Caution, had it been obſerv'd by theſe Repreſenters, we ſhou'd not have ſo many things, of which they cou'd have no proof, affirm'd ſo

so positively. The other Representation has, by omitting a great number of Facts roundly asserted here, particularly all relating to the Combination and Confederacy to carry on the Cause of Infidelity, in a great measure avoided splitting on this Rock.'

Mr. *Whiston* says, 'We may easily learn from 'the whole Conduct of our present, and other the 'like late Convocations and Synods, how very fallible such Assemblies are in Matters of Religion, 'where few or none dare speak their real Sentiments freely and openly, and every single Member is afraid of the rest; where a few notable and 'managing Men, supported by others behind the 'Curtain, can lead whole Bodies as they please; 'where Examination is esteem'd very dangerous, and 'beneath the Dignity of the Body; where the common Right to be heard before Censure is deny'd; 'where Facts notoriously false pass for great Motives and Arguments, and particular Drawers up 'of Censures or Representations can engage whole 'Bodies to assert such Facts; where two distinct 'Houses shall so little agree about the Doctrines of 'the Church, that out of eighteen Heretical Articles censur'd in the Upper, but twelve shall appear censur'd by the Lower, and the Upper shall 'appear so far unconcern'd about one Third of its 'Censure, as to drop it immediately in compliance 'with the Lower.' What I quote this for, is to shew, that if the Upper House cou'd, I will not say drop their Faith, but let so many Propositions pass for Orthodox, which before they had condemn'd as Heretical, rather than disagree with the Lower; one may, after such a condescending Piece of Compliance, very easily conclude, that all those Facts and Circumstances that the Upper House cou'd not come into, were not in the least prov'd to them.

Postscript to his 2d Appendix, p. 77.

The Reverend Dr. *Atterbury* says, 'That the 'Art of Scandal is grown to a high pitch of Perfection, and that some of the Order are extremely improv'd in their Skill that way.' But none certainly more than the Compilers of this Repre-

3d Letter about the Entry of the Parliamentary Writ in the Journal of the Convoc.

ſentation, ſince 'tis impoſſible to exceed them in the black Art of ſpreading Scandal; Who, to make the World believe that the Church and Kingdom are over-run with Infidelity, ſuppoſe that which is mention'd only by a ſingle Author, to be ſaid by a Party, and to be the reſult of their united Counſels for promoting the Cauſe of Infidelity. And that the Confederacy for Infidelity may appear the greater, what one Author only writes, is introduc'd with *they ſay* in ſeveral Places; nay ſometimes no Author can be found for what they charge on a number of Men.

P. 12. 'They ſay, When wild Pretences to Inſpiration 'and Miracles have been ſet up by modern Im-'poſtors, they have ſeem'd to countenance the 'Fraud, and give Credit to it with a view of draw-'ing Parallels from thence, to the prejudice of re-'al Inſpiration and Miracles.'

I may venture to ſay, that cou'd they produce any one, except a *High-Church* Writer, who has endeavour'd to draw ſuch a Parallel, it wou'd not have been expreſs'd ſo tenderly with a *ſeem to countenance*, &c. and that they have no more ground for this Charge, than for calling a parcel of poor deluded Wretches *Impoſtors*, when their laying ſuch a ſtreſs on *Emes*'s Reſurrection alone is a ſufficient Proof of their being as much in earneſt as the Reverend Mr. *Maſon* of *Northamptonſhire*, and the diſtracted Crew that follow'd him.

Had I room to mention what the High-Church Writers have ſaid on this Head, it was eaſy to ſhew, that the Repreſenters cou'd not invent any thing more groſly ſcandalous of others, than what might be really found in them; nothing ever yet P. 7, 8, &c. in Print can equal what is quoted in the *New Catechiſm* from Mr. *Dodwell*, Dr. *Hicks*, Mr. *Leſley*, &c.

P. 12. The Repreſenters ſay, 'They have in a grave 'and ſolemn manner recounted the fabulous Relations 'occurring in Heathen Writers; they have repre-'ſented theſe as carrying ſome of the chief Marks

'and

'and Signatures of Truth, and easier to be con-
'temn'd than disprov'd, on the foot of the Argu-
'ments urg'd in behalf of the Truth of Christia-
'nity.'

As in this place they can only mean the Author of the *Detection of* Lesley's *four Marks, proving them to be Marks of the Beast*, so it wou'd be too long to give an Account of the Controversy between them; and therefore I shall only say, That I do not see how this Writer's allowing the relation of Miracles, recorded in Heathen Stories, to carry not only what his Adversary calls the chief Marks and Signatures of Truth, but to be really true, cou'd be a greater Crime in him than in the Fathers, who, in their Apologies and other Writings, maintain, that the Miracles occurring in Heathen Writers, and in particular those mention'd by him, were really done by Evil Spirits; and sure they were no *Factors for Infidelity*.

There's no pleasing some Men: for if you believe the ambiguous or senseless Answers of the Oracles to be only the Contrivance and Roguery of cheating Priests, you will hardly escape passing for an Infidel, because you contradict the Fathers, who affirm'd they were real Oracles deliver'd by evil Spirits; but if you think the other miraculous Relations, related by Heathen Authors, to be true, or but to carry some of Mr. *Lesley*'s chief Marks of Truth, you are then a Promoter of Infidelity, tho the Fathers equally believ'd those Miracles, and suppos'd them done by the same supernatural Power, as the Oracles deliver'd their Answers.

The best we can say of the Fathers, if what the Representers say is true, is, That they were a pack of credulous old Fools, in believing the fabulous Relations of Miracles recorded in Heathen Writers; whereas in the Judgment of the Representers, the supposing that the very best attested of those Miracles carries but some of the chief Marks of Truth, is destroying those Proofs on which Christianity is built, and an evident

Mark that they, who affirm it, are not only Infidels, but that they are combin'd together for carrying on the Cauſe of Infidelity; and therefore tho there is but one Perſon who affirms this, yet to pin down Infidelity on a Party, it is uſher'd in with *They ſay*.

The Author of *a Letter to Mr.* Dodwell, *containing ſome Remarks on Mr.* Clark's *Anſwer to his Epiſtolary Diſcourſe*, after having ſhewn the Abſurdity of being govern'd by Authorities, and of taking up with receiv'd Opinions without Examination, ſays, 'I publickly return you my Thanks for 'your Diſcourſe, wherein you have ſhewn a noble 'Example of Freedom and Liberty in attacking a 'receiv'd Opinion.—Under the Protection of your 'Authority, I ſhall propoſe ſome of my Thoughts.'

This Compliment, tho taken ever ſo ſtrictly, can amount to no more than uſing Mr. *Dodwell's* Authority as a handle to introduce his own Sentiments againſt an authoriz'd Opinion, yet it has occaſion'd

P. 12, 13. this following Harangue: 'When particular and 'unwarrantable Opinions have at any time been 'maintain'd by Men otherwiſe eminent for Piety 'and Learning, the Friends of Infidelity have not 'fail'd to lay hold of that Opportunity, and improve it to the prejudice of Religion; thoſe very 'Perſons, whoſe learned Labours in defence of our 'common Faith they had before undervalu'd and 'held in utmoſt contempt, they began now to extol 'and pretended to revere: for the ſake of their Errors, their deep Judgment they admir'd, their Integrity they magnify'd, and appeal'd to their Authority as deciſive in favour of a Paradox, which 'they wou'd have refus'd to have been concluded 'by it in any other Point whatſoever.'

Preſ. to his two Treatiſes, p. 10.

Dr. *Hicks*, from *Feſtus Pompeius*, ſays, it was an old Proverb, *Sabini quod volunt ſomniant*, A Sabine cou'd dream whatever he had a mind; and therefore no Sacrifice was made without ſuch a religious Dreamer. But here's no ſingle Sabine, but a Body of Men, who, without recourſe to Dreams, can with all the Solemnity and Gravity imaginable tell

whole Nation what they pleaſe; and if they can upon ſo ſmall a foundation raiſe ſuch a vaſt Superſtructure, and upon no better ground draw ſuch Inferences, and give ſuch a turn to things; when by the Preſs being open, they run the riſque of being expos'd, what will they ſcruple to aſſert, if ever the Preſs is reſtrain'd in their favour? Men who are bred up to haranguing, may be ſo long us'd to put falſe Colours, and give wrong turns to things, that at laſt it may become almoſt impoſſible for them to repreſent Matters plainly and ſincerely.

The Repreſenters ſay, 'That by diſplaying the P. 11.
'Cheats and Impoſitions of Pagan and Popiſh
'Prieſts, they have endeavour'd to draw Infamy
'on the Prieſthood in general, and to render the
'Order it ſelf, in what Religion ſoever it was
'found, equally the Object of publick Averſion and
'Contempt.'

The diſplaying the Cheats of the Popiſh and Pagan Prieſts wou'd be a very high Panegyrick on any Prieſts, who do not practiſe the like; but to ſuppoſe, as theſe Repreſenters do, that the very mentioning the Cheats either of Pagan or Popiſh Prieſts, tends to draw Infamy on the Prieſthood in general, and to make the Order it ſelf, in whatſoever Religion it be found, the Object of publick Averſion or Contempt, is in effect ſaying, That Prieſts of all Religions are the ſame, and that we have Prieſts at home, who for Cheats and Tricks can match any Popiſh or Pagan Prieſts on the Globe.

Laymen can bear being told of the Crafts or Cheats practis'd by People of their own Profeſſion; but the High-Church Prieſts, who no doubt underſtand their own Intereſt, can't endure the mentioning the Cheats of Prieſts, tho of a Religion never ſo contrary to their own.

Was it Sir *R. H.* who reflected on the Proteſtant Clergy of the Church of *England*, when, in his *Hiſtory of Religion*, he expos'd the Cheats of the Romiſh Prieſts; or was it the Reverend Dr. *A*——*y*, who ſaid, *it was whipping our Clergy on the back of the Romiſh*, and thereby gave too juſt occaſion for

for replying, that they richly deserv'd it for riding on their Backs?

Immorality of the Stage, p. 103.

One wou'd think the Reverend Mr. *Collier* had a mind not to vindicate, but expose the Honour of the Clergy, when he says, 'That the Author of 'Don *Sebastian* strikes at the Bishops thro the Sides 'of the *Mufti*, and borrows the name of the *Turk* 'to make the Christian ridiculous; he knows the 'Transition from one Religion to another is natu-'ral, and the Application easy.' And tho the Heathen Priests were the most lying People then in the World, yet he will not forgive *Oedipus* his swaggering, as he calls it, against Priests, in saying to one of them:

Why seek I Truth from Thee?
The Smiles of Courtiers, and the Harlots Tears
Are Truths to what Priests tell:
O why has Priesthood Privilege to lye,
And yet to be believ'd!

I am afraid the World, whatever they did before, will be apt, since the publishing this Representation, to be of Mr. *Collier*'s Mind, and to think the *Transition natural, and the Application easy.*

Baxter's *Postscript to his Paraphrase on the New Testam.*

What Mr. *Baxter* says in his Paraphrase on the New Testament, of the hypocritical Priests and Pharisees, was upon a *Clergy-Search*, as he calls it, condemn'd as a Libel on the Bishops and Clergy of the Church of *England*, tho he did not so much as mention them; but by way of *Innuendo*, he must needs mean them: and for this he was severely fin'd, and had dy'd in Prison, where he had been confin'd two years, had not the King pardon'd him.

Postscr. to the Convocation's Proceedings, p. 90.

Mr. *Whiston* complains, 'That it is frequently 'in the Mouths of the Writers for the Church, 'that some things are to be conceal'd for fear they 'gratify Atheists and Deists; and says, Certainly 'nothing prejudices them more than such Procedure 'and Expressions, while they thereby perceive Re-'mains of pious Frauds every where, and suspect 'it has been so from the beginning. They see they

'are

'are not to be let plainly into the Truth of Facts, 'but to be manag'd with Cunning and worldly 'Prudence, for fear of being diſguſted at Chriſtia-'nity.' But the Repreſenters great Caution by much outdoes this, and will not have us mention the Cheats even of the Enemies of Chriſtianity, the Pagan Prieſts, for fear it ſtrikes at the whole Order of Chriſtian Prieſts.

Our Clergy, when they formerly excluded ſome part of the Holy Scripture from being read in Churches, to make room for Apocryphal Books, particularly for the Story of the Cheats of the Prieſts of *Bell*, certainly did not think that the mentioning the Cheats of Pagan Prieſts tended to reflect on the Prieſthood in general. Had they been of the Repreſenters Mind, I can't ſee but they muſt have hinder'd a good part of the Old Teſtament from being publickly read, becauſe it's ſo ſevere a Reflection on the Tricks, Cheats and Roguery of the *Jewiſh* Prieſts: and no ſmall Portion of the New Teſtament muſt have undergone the ſame Fate, ſince that Divine Book is the greateſt Satyr that can be on Prieſtcraft; and our Saviour himſelf, upon all occaſions, expoſes the Conduct of the then eſtabliſh'd Prieſthood.

The Repreſenters ſay, 'Infidelity, when em- P. 17, 18.
'brac'd, cancels all the ſtrongeſt Obligations of 'Duty, and diſſolves thoſe religious Bonds of Obe-'dience, by which the Thrones of Princes are beſt 'ſecur'd, and their Authority moſt firmly ſuppor-'ted; and therefore we can't but obſerve to your 'Majeſty, that they who derided Churches, and 'Creeds, and Myſteries, were the ſame who in-'ſulted the Memory, and juſtify'd the Murder of 'the Royal Martyr, applauded the Rebellion rais'd 'againſt him, and have taken a great deal of wic-'ked pains in collecting and publiſhing the Works 'of thoſe Writers, who were the moſt declar'd 'Enemies to Monarchy.'

If all this Section relates only to Mr. *Toland*, who publiſh'd a Book, entitled, *Chriſtianity not Myſterious*, and ſometime after reprinted the Works of

of *Harrington* and *Milton* (who no doubt were as great Commonwealthſmen as ſome of thoſe *Greek* and *Roman* Writers, who have been ſet out and adorn'd with Notes by High-Church Prieſts) If this, I ſay, relates only to him, and they can't produce ſeveral Writers who have affirm'd all theſe things; will not the World have ſome reaſon to ſuſpect that this is only ſaid to put them on a falſe Scent, and divert the Nation from diſcerning who are the real Enemies to the preſent Conſtitution, eſpecially ſince they have taken no notice of thoſe Principles, tho daily increaſing, which make the Revolution, and all done upon it, particularly the ſettling the Succeſſion in the Houſe of *Hannover*, ſo many Acts of Rebellion and Uſurpation?

If Men can, without any ground, thus ſolemnly charge Crimes of the higheſt nature on a Party, what are they not capable of doing? Whoſe Reputation, Fortune or Life is ſafe, that falls under their Diſpleaſure? *Come not thou, O my Soul, into their Secret! unto their Aſſembly, mine Honour, be not thou united!*

Gen. 49. 6.

P. 12. 'They have, ſay the Repreſenters, with Oſtentation enumerated the ſeveral ſpurious Treatiſes 'forg'd in the earlieſt times of the Church, 'which they repreſent as times of great Fraud and 'Impoſture on one hand, of great Ignorance and 'Credulity on the other; and they have left this 'Reflection to be apply'd to the Books of the New 'Teſtament, and the Authors of them.'

This too relates only to Mr. *Toland*, who, in his *Amyntor*, has given us a Catalogue of thoſe ſpurious Treatiſes, which theſe Gentlemen likewiſe own were forg'd in the earlieſt times of the Church, and thereby are as much guilty of repreſenting them as times of Impoſture on the one hand, and of Credulity on the other, as the Author of *Amyntor* himſelf; who certainly did not, as they ſay, leave his Readers to apply what he ſays of the ſpurious Books or the Writers of them, to the New Teſtament or the Authors of it, when he enumerates thoſe ſpurious Books and the Writers of them.

If those Gentlemen were not very much at a loss for Arguments to make out the late excessive Growth of Infidelity, they wou'd not have interspers'd up and down their Representation so many things from Mr. *Toland*; for they have not yet done with him: When they say, 'That the Authority of 'the present Canon of Scripture has been represented 'as standing on a very precarious Foundation, and the 'Spuriousness of several Passages, and of some Books 'of it, was more than insinuated;' this also relates to Mr. *Toland*'s *Amyntor*, in which there's nothing that so much strikes at the Authority of the Canon, as a long Quotation out of Mr. *Dodwell*, of which till then our Divines were pleas'd not to take the least notice. P. 8. Amyntor, *p.* 68.

I beg leave to ask these Representers, whether it wou'd be fair, if one, who was writing the State of the Religion of the Nation, shou'd reflect only on one Party, tho the other infinitely more deserv'd it; and to prove that there was an excessive Growth of Infidelity amongst them, shou'd disperse up and down, in his Representation, the irreligious and profane Sayings of Mr. *Dodwell*, and generally introduce them with *they say*.

Shou'd he, for instance, instead of quoting the proper Author, introduce his Representation with a *They say*, 'That the Writers of the first Cen- 'tury seem to know nothing of the Canonical 'Books of the New Testament; That if they 'had been then publish'd, they wou'd have been 'overwhelm'd under a * multitude of Apocry- 'phal and Suppositititious Books, *&c.*' and shou'd add, That *they* have expos'd the Prophecies of the Old Testament to Scorn and Contempt †: That to take off the Proof of the Truth of Christianity, drawn from the number of its Martyrs, *they* have writ a ‖ Dissertation, to prove most of those Relations to be Fables: That to expose and turn our Holy Sacraments into ridicule, *they* have maintain'd, That the Lord's Supper was instituted to keep the Laity in subjection to the Clergy **; That the Soul being a Principle naturally mortal, none can render it im-

* Dodw. Dissert. on Irenæus, §. 38, 39.

† *His two Letters about going into Orders.*

‖ Dodw. Dissert. de Pauc. Martyr.

** Dodwell's *Premonition to his Epist. Discourse,*

† Dodw. *whole Ep. Diſcourſe.* immortal but Biſhops †: That to aggrandize the Power of Biſhops, *they* moſt blaſphemouſly *ſay*, 'That God is oblig'd to open and ſhut Heaven's 'Gate, according to the Sentence of the * Bi- 'ſhops; That to judg of a Biſhop and his Act, 'is the ſame as to judg of God and his Chriſt:' That to ridicule the Doctrine of the Church concerning Predeſtination, *they ſay*, 'Paul borrow'd 'his Notion of it from the *Phariſees*, and they 'from the † *Stoicks*.' I ſay,

* Paræn. p. 196. Ibid.

† Proleg. ad J. Stern, &c. §. 41. p. 147.

If twenty other Expreſſions of Mr. *Dodwell*, altogether as unaccountable as theſe, were introduc'd with a *They ſay*, or ſo diſpers'd up and down in a Repreſentation, that they might ſeem to be written by ſeveral Perſons; wou'd not High-Church exclaim againſt this as a moſt villanous Practice? And yet this wou'd be fairer in the Caſe of *Dodwell*, than of his Countryman *Toland*; ſince it muſt be *a very large Book* that can contain all the extravagant Commendations that High-Church have beſtow'd on this muddy-headed *Iriſhman*: and the Univerſity of *Oxford* did themſelves the Honour to prefer him, tho only a *Maſter of Arts* of *Dublin*, before any of their own *Doctors*, when they choſe him for their Hiſtory-Profeſſor. Nor did they, except by way of *Reverence*, take notice of any of his profane Sayings, till Mr. *Toland* quoted that which ſtrikes at the Authority of the New Teſtament.

If your High-Church Prieſts wou'd think it uncharitable to ſuppoſe, that Mr. *Dodwell* was an Infidel, and that he writ with a Deſign to overthrow Chriſtianity; wou'd it not become them, who with all their Inſinuations and Innuendo's can't charge ſo many things tending to promote Infidelity on any Perſon or any Party, to be much more ſparing in their Cenſures; eſpecially if they conſider that there are few High-Church Authors, who have wrote as much as *Dodwell*, but have vented as many irreligious Sayings? And how many ſtaring Paſſages of this nature are to be found in a Three-Penny Paper call'd *The New Catechiſm*, tho that contains no more of their irreligious and impious Notions

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than could be compriz'd in ſhort Anſwers?

That nothing may be omitted that can be thought in the leaſt to favour Infidelity, Mr. *Aſgill*'s Dream, that by the Terms of the *Covenant* of *Grace*, Men, if their Faith equals that of *Enoch* and *Elijah*, may like them never taſte of Death, is repreſented as a Whimſy too extravagant for him to believe, and therefore muſt be wrote with a Deſign to expoſe all Religion. But I ſee no reaſon why there may not be at leaſt one Man in this Age of that Opinion, when in the very firſt Age of Chriſtianity there was a whole Sect of Chriſtians call'd *Menandrians*, who believ'd their Baptiſm ſecur'd them from ever dying; and the Reverend Mr. *Reeves* compares theſe Primitive Chriſtians with Mr. *Aſgill*, and ſays, that *their Doctrine was much of the ſame Complexion with what Mr.* Aſgill *broach'd lately, tho not with the ſame Succeſs of Followers.*

Euſeb. Eccl. Hiſt. l. 3. c. 26.

Remarks in his Tranſlat. of Juſtin's *Apology*, p. 54.

And now let the Reader judg whether the Repreſenters have any juſt ground to complain, that their own Church is over-run with Atheiſm and Deiſm; or to ſuppoſe that Infidelity prevails under the Government and Care of ſuch a nurſing Mother of the Church, ſo famous for her exemplary Religion and Piety, more than it did even in the Reigns of the moſt impious and irreligious of any of her Predeceſſors.

Cou'd theſe Gentlemen pick out among that Party, on which they labour to fix the exceſſive Growth of Infidelity, ſuch a number as the Repreſenters are ſuppos'd to be, who wou'd not ſcruple to aſſert but the twentieth part of the Falſhoods that are in this Paper publiſh'd by *Morphew*; they wou'd then have a much better foundation for their Charge of the want of Religion, both Natural and Reveal'd.

The Repreſenters, in the Opinion of all impartial Judges, have not more expos'd themſelves by the moſt unjuſtifiable Methods they have taken to fix Irreligion, Impiety and Infidelity on a Party, the freeſt in the World from deſerving that Cenſure, than by overlooking all thoſe of their own ſide, eſpecially the Eccleſiaſticks, out of whoſe Works

Volumes of irreligious, profane and impious Sayings might be collected.

All Clergymen, God be thank'd, are not thus partial: one of them we see has Honesty enough to say, 'With what Face or Conscience, Mr. *Prolocutor*, can we offer to complain of the Licentiousness taken by Lay-Writers, and yet connive at the like Offences given by the Ministers of our Church, I doubt greater Offences? for if all the ill Books against Religion, Scripture, Laws of this Land, and Constitution of this Church, were here pack'd up together, I wou'd undertake to pick out the worst of them, by pointing at those written by Clergymen, even of the most profane Drollery, as well as the most serious Heresy.'

A Letter about a Motion in Convocat. p. 22.

If these Gentlemen had the least regard to their own Reputation, they wou'd never have been guilty of so gross Partiality, in most impolitickly overlooking the Author of the *Tale of a Tub.* Cou'd any, so justly as he, deserve to be reckon'd a *Factor for Infidelity?* Was there ever a Book so full of Irreligion, Profaneness, Impiety and Blasphemy? Did they not know that it had given the highest Scandal to all sober Christians; and the more so, because written by a Christian Priest, to banter and ridicule the whole Christian Institution?

Mr. *Hobbs* says, that *the Fear of Power invisible feign'd by the Mind, or imagin'd from Tales publickly allow'd, is Religion; not allow'd, Superstition.* But our Reverend Divine is resolv'd to outdo that Atheist, and makes Christianity to be not only a *Tale*, but a *Tale of a Tub.*

Leviath. Part I. chap. 6.

Lucian, tho bred a Heathen, and consequently with all those Prejudices that Christianity (then so little understood) labour'd under, yet has been condemn'd in all After-Ages as a most execrable Villain, not so much for his speaking against Christianity (for what else cou'd be expected from a Heathen) but for treating so serious a thing as Religion after so ludicrous a manner. But the Reverend Author of the *Tale of a Tub*, tho bred a Christian, and from his Youth dedicated to the Service of the Christian

Christian Altar, and made a Dispenser of God's Holy Word and Sacraments, and so doubly bound to defend the Gospel, as well as to *become a wholesome Example to the Flock of Christ*, according to his solemn Vow at his receiving Orders, has infinitely outdone that Heathen Scoffer in ridiculing the Gospel, and treating Christianity with so much Scorn and Contempt. And yet this precious Divine, notwithstanding the great Clamour against Blasphemy and Infidelity, expects, for the great Services he has done his Party, to be advanc'd to some * Ecclesiastical Post, equal to his mighty Talents in Banter and Buffonery; Talents which never fail to be greatly esteem'd by High-Church, as being that which in Controversies of Religion they chiefly depend on.

* *The Deanery of* Wells.

Shou'd it be true what this Reverend Buffoon says, 'That abundance of the good People of *Eng-* P. 286.
'*land* will be satisfy'd with no other Machine than
'that of *Mahomet*, who refus'd to be born to Hea-
'ven but upon an Ass:' Yet can any think that such a Priest, tho ever so much an Ass, can carry a Man thither?

Such a Priest, I say, who spends a whole Chapter to ridicule Inspiration? And to shew what a contemptible Opinion he has of his Bible, tells us, 'That wise Philosophers hold all Writings P. 191.
'to be fruitful in the proportion they are dark;
'and therefore the true illuminated, that is the
'darkest of all, have met with numberless Com-
'mentators.'

What the inspir'd Authors affirm of God himself, he, after his profane manner, applies to a Sute of Clothes, and says, that *in them we live, and* P. 61.
move, and have our Being: and not content with blasphemously affirming, *That the Corruption of the* P. 294.
Senses is the Generation of the Spirit; he, as tho his Ambition was to be guilty of the Sin against the Holy Ghost, talks of *the Analogy between cloven* P. 294.
Tongues and cloven Feet. But when the Design of his Book is to make the whole of Christianity a *Tale of a Tub*, 'tis no wonder that it is full of

such

ſuch Expreſſions as theſe: the calling the Bleſſed
P. 108. Virgin a *Cow*, and the Holy Croſs a *Sign-Poſt*, are ſome of the things the leaſt offenſive in this Reverend Author.

I muſt do him this Juſtice, as to obſerve, that never did the Infidel and Prieſt appear ſo blended and mixt together, as they do in all his Writings; and his Converſation is, if poſſible, more ſcandalous than his *Tale of a Tub:* there he outlyes, outcurſes and outſwears his Emperor *Peter*, and vents Bawdy among the Women as faſt as Blaſphemy among the Men; and he is never better pleas'd than when he is proſtituting his Pen in ſome vile Job, too ſcandalous for any other Writer: and therefore 'tis not ſtrange at preſent he is in full Imploy; tho, for the Good of the Church, it were to be wiſh'd, he had never been worſe imploy'd than in writing *a pious Meditation on a Broomſtick.*

Had the Repreſenters, to make out their Charge, complain'd of thoſe who have taken the Oaths contrary to their Conſciences, and for more than twenty Years plaid the Hypocrite in the moſt ſolemn Acts of Devotion, the Complaint had been juſt; for ſuch Men muſt long ago have got the better of their Conſciences. And the Repreſenters beſt know, for whoſe ſake it was that the greater Sin of *Perjury*, as well as the leſſer Sin of *Lying*, was not once mention'd in this Repreſentation.

Setting aſide theſe High Churchmen, the Repreſenters can have no Pretence for giving the Preference, upon the account of Religion, to the times preceding the Revolution. They ſure can't forget how Atheiſm and Deiſm prevail'd in the Reign of *Charles* II. What a Noiſe did the Works of a notorious Atheiſt make in thoſe Days? and he, if we may believe what the Clergy then wrote, proſelyted not a few of the better ſort, who went under the name of *Hobbiſts*; a name which, tho then very common, is now quite extinct.

The only Book now in being, which from one end to the other is an open Defence of Atheiſm, is that of *Lucretius:* and yet that moſt impious Book,

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in *Charles* II's Reign, was with infinite Pains turn'd into *Engliſh* Verſe, that the Smoothneſs and Sweetneſs of the Metre might ſupply what was wanting in the Argument; that the Elegance of the Expreſſion, the melodious Harmony of Number, and all thoſe other bewitching Beauties, which attend good Poetry, might inſenſibly inſtil the Poiſon into the Minds of unthinking People; eſpecially of the Youth, whoſe Imagination is generally too ſtrong for their Reaſon, and their Fancy too powerful for their Judgment. And this celebrated Tranſlation was not only made by an *Oxford* Scholar (who was thereupon prefer'd) but it was licens'd by the Univerſity of *Oxford*, where *he* was look'd on as a raw Lad that had not read the *Lucretius* of *Creech*, who dy'd as he liv'd, like a true Atheiſt; but being a High-Church Prieſt, his murdering himſelf was not made to paſs for a Judgment.

Character of Ch. II.

One in the firſt Rank of Quality, and plac'd, by *the Memorial of the Church*, in the firſt Rank of High-Church Champions, ſays, in the Character he gives of *Ch.* II. 'I dare confidently affirm his Religion to be only that which is 'vulgarly, tho unjuſtly, counted none at all, I mean 'Deiſm; and this uncommon Opinion he ow'd more 'to the Livelineſs of his Temper, than either to 'much Reading or much Conſideration: for his 'Quickneſs of Apprehenſion, at firſt View, cou'd 'diſcern thro the ſeveral Cheats of pious Pretences; 'and his natural Lazineſs confirm'd him in an e-'qual Miſtruſt of them all, for fear of examining 'which is beſt.'

Is not this owning that all Religion but Natural is a Cheat; and that tho ſome Cheats are not as bad as others, yet that a Man of quick Apprehenſion, without much Reading or much Conſideration, ſees thro them all?

Tho there was an exceſſive Growth of Infidelity in the Reigns preceding the Revolution, yet *that* put ſuch a ſtop to it, that notwithſtanding the Liberty of the Preſs, nothing was publiſh'd in favour of it, I mean by Laymen, except what I have juſt

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now quoted from a High-Church Champion, and *the Oracles of Reaſon* publiſh'd by *Ch. Gildon*, who not only recanted, but wrote a Confutation of his former Errors. But this Repreſentation alone (now that part of it which relates to the Growth of Infidelity is examin'd to the bottom) is a Demonſtration that at leaſt that part of the Nation, which is not tainted with High-Church Principles, can't be charg'd with publiſhing any thing in favour of Infidelity. And ſince this is all that the Repreſenters, upon the ſtricteſt Examination, can produce, to juſtify the great Clamour which the High-Church Prieſts have made about the Increaſe of Infidelity; is it not (now freed from Miſrepreſentations) the higheſt Panegyrick on thoſe it was deſign'd to expoſe, and the greateſt Satyr on thoſe to whom it was intended to do the moſt Service?

If the exceſſive Growth of Infidelity, which the Repreſenters complain of, be not to be found among the Laity, we muſt of courſe look for it among the Clergy. And 'tis no eaſy matter to diſcover *all* the Infidels among *them*, becauſe *their* Intereſt (tho they were void of all Faith) muſt oblige *them* to declare on the ſide of Chriſtianity; and therefore 'tis by their Conduct alone that we are to learn who are in earneſt for Religion, and who profeſs it only for the ſake of worldly Ends.

If we ſee Clergymen, under colour of Religion, aiming to make Mankind give them *that Faith* and *that Obedience* which can be due to *God alone*, *viz.* an implicit Faith, and an abſolute Obedience, and therefore pretend that nothing leſs than Damnation is the Sanction by which they enforce their Decrees:

If they pervert the moſt ſolemn Offices of Religion to vile and indirect Purpoſes, and ſcarce ever in their Sermons uſe the moſt ſacred Name of God, but to countenance an Untruth, and do almoſt as often miſapply as quote the Scriptures:

If, upon all occaſions, they ſacrifice every thing Civil or Sacred, to gratify their Malice or Ambition; and inſtead of inculcating Charity, Moderation,

ration, mutual Forbearance, doing as Men wou'd be done unto (which Natural as well as Reveal'd Religion require) they preach up ſuch Maxims as extirpate all natural Pity and Humanity, and create everlaſting Animoſities, Feuds, Quárrels and Perſecutions; we can't place ſuch Men among the Miniſters of the Goſpel (which is a Goſpel of Peace) but among Hypocrites and Unbelievers.

If they (becauſe Slavery produces Ignorance, and Ignorance whatever the Prieſts pleaſe) pervert the Scripture, in order to deſtroy the Free Governments they live under, and preach up Arbitrary Power as *Jure Divino*:

If they endeavour to ſtifle Truth, by calumniating the Perſons of their Adverſaries, by miſrepreſenting their Doctrines; and boggle at no other vile and wicked means to impoſe on the Underſtandings of the Laity, in order to tyrannize over their Conſciences, Perſons and Properties: is it not plain that ſuch Men, whatever Pretences they make, ſerve no God but *Mammon*, and have no Religion but Intereſt?

It's in vain for Men to pretend to Religion, if they ſcruple not to act inconſiſtently in matters of the higheſt conſequence, and at every turn talk backward and forward. For inſtance, Cou'd they preach up Paſſive-Obedience one Day, then forſwear it the next, and on the third reſume it again: If they could lay down ſuch Principles as made it impoſſible for King *James* to loſe the Right he had to the Peoples Allegiance, yet at the ſame time cou'd own King *William* as *rightful* and *lawful*:

If they cou'd abjure the Popiſh Line, and yet at the ſame time cry up Hereditary Right:

If they can ſwear to the Queen's Eccleſiaſtical Supremacy, and at the ſame time make her ſubject to the Prieſts in Matters Eccleſiaſtical:

If they cou'd diſown the Biſhops depriv'd by Parliament, and yet at the ſame time make it impoſſible for the Lay-Powers to diſſolve the Spiritual relation between the Biſhop and the People of his Diſtrict:

If they cou'd repreſent the Biſhops as ready to give up all the Rights of the Epiſcopal Church, and yet at the ſame time complain of their carrying their Epiſcopal Power too high, and lording it over their oppreſs'd Presbyters :

If they cou'd maintain that the Government of the Church was, by Divine Apoſtolical Right, in the Biſhops; and at the ſame time cou'd claim an equal ſhare with them in the Supreme or Legiſlative Power of the Church :

If they cou'd vote the Church out of danger, and at the ſame time poſſeſs the People that it was in the *greateſt* :

If they cou'd cry up the Church as the beſt conſtituted Church in the World, truly Primitive and Apoſtolick ; and yet at the ſame time repreſent her founded in Lay-Uſurpation, and Secular Encroachments on its Divine Spiritual Powers :

There's no Opinion ſo ſtrange which ſome may not really believe ; but nothing but harden'd Foreheads and ſear'd Conſciences can make Men act ſo inconſiſtently, and have ſo little regard to their moſt ſolemn Declarations.

If they cou'd rail at the Whigs for oppoſing thoſe Acts of Parliament, which have ſo much clipt the Prerogative ; and yet at the ſame time repreſent them as Antimonarchical and Republicans :

If they can pretend one Set of Principles when they rail at Diſſenters, another when they write againſt Papiſts :

If they can build Popiſh Practices upon Antipopiſh Principles, and can condemn the Papiſts for hindring People, by a Reſtraint of the Preſs, from ſeeing what their Adverſaries write, and frighting them by Spiritual and Civil Penalties from judging for themſelves ; and at the ſame time can zealouſly contend for the Practice of theſe things themſelves :

In a word ; If they can at any time, without the leaſt bluſh, upon proſpect of Advantage, change their Maxims; and at the ſame time repreſent thoſe as Enemies to the Church, who will not change with them, ſay and unſay juſt as it ſerves their Intereſt:

And

And if, to justify these Practices, they can coin such Distinctions, as make the Scripture a Nose of Wax, and destroy the Obligations of all Oaths and all moral Duties: I say, if there are Ecclesiasticks who can make Religion the Cloke for these and other such vile Practices, a Man can't be at a loss under what head to rank them.

If one sees a vile Wretch striking at the foundation of the Government, and arraigning the Administration; and, the better to do this, manifestly perverting the Sacred Writ, and before the most August Assembly in the World solemnly invoking God's Name to a most notorious Falshood; how can one believe that this Man has a Grain of Religion? or that his chief Abettors had much more, I mean those Reverend Divines, who if they did not *make* his Speech, cou'd not but be sensible of all his abominable Prevarications; yet with lifted up Eyes, and all other Actions and Gestures, seem'd to be as much affected with all he said, as any of those foolish Women whom this holy Farce had set a crying. Such a Conduct as this is apt to make People suspect there are in the World (to borrow an Expression from this Representation) *determin'd Enemies of all Religion and Goodness*, and that none but such, tho to get the D——y of *C——C——* or *C——e*, wou'd have acted so scandalous a part.

Some High-Church Priests can't be so much on their Guard, but strange Expressions in favour of Atheism will most unaccountably break out. The Godly Dr. *Hickes*, in the Person of an Atheist, makes a Speech of at least four Pages long in praise of Atheism, and says, among other things, 'Is there among ten thousand Drunkards, Swearers, Fornicators, Thieves, Murderers, one Atheist at publick Executions? Do not Criminals profess and shew some Religion? Are there not as many Robberies, Rapes, Treasons, Murders and Cheats, even in Christian Countries who pretend most to Religion, as in the most ignorant and barbarous, who have the least? Did not *Epicurus* live as well as *Socrates*?' Nay, he is so bold as to make his

Pref. to his two Treatises, from p. 108 *to* 112.

Atheiſt ſay, 'Is it not injurious to Men to have the 'Belief of ſuch ſuperſtitious Opinions impos'd on 'them, becauſe it makes them their own Slaves, 'and torments them Day and Night with needleſs 'Terrors; and that whom the Rods, Axes, Goals, '*&c.* cou'd not terrify from violating their Duty 'to the Publick, neither, as Experience ſhew'd, 'wou'd the fear of an Inviſible Power reſtrain?—— 'that he who wou'd impoſe the Belief of ſuch ſlaviſh 'Doctrines, was as great an Enemy to the whole Race 'of Mankind, as he who ſent them to the Gallies.'

That the Reader might believe that he had not mention'd all that cou'd be ſaid for Atheiſts, he adds, 'There are Unbelievers that can argue better than *I* 'can for them;' tho in the Opinion of impartial Judges, he has argu'd better for Atheiſm than any Cauſe he ever undertook.

No Divine, tho ever ſo much an Atheiſt, would in his own Perſon write for Atheiſm; and therefore whether the Doctor deſigns in earneſt to favour Atheiſm, can only be judg'd by the end he *had in* writing this long Panegyrick on Atheiſm.

The Doctor's Adverſary had aſſerted, That an Atheiſt was an Enemy to all Mankind; and that he who deſtroy'd all Conſcience, cou'd not pretend a Right to Toleration on the account of Conſcience. The Doctor, on the contrary, not being able it ſeems to bear that an Atheiſt ſhou'd lie under ſuch a Character, muſters up all the Arguments he cou'd think of to prove, that Atheiſm was not only an innocent Opinion, but highly beneficial to Mankind; without offering the leaſt Antidote to this Poiſon, but ſuffering his Reader to go off with all the favourable Impreſſions of Atheiſm he cou'd infuſe in him; nor cou'd he do otherwiſe, without giving up the Cauſe to his Adverſary. Beſides, 'tis in his *own* Perſon that he ſays, *That an Atheiſt has a Conſcience, and that 'tis a ſpeculative Point* (that is, a Point not influencing Practice) *whether there be a God, or whether he minds human Affairs.*

Ib. p. 108.

Was there more Infidelity in the Nation than even the Repreſenters would have us believe, yet we need

need not seek for any other Source of it than the Conduct of such Eccleſiasticks as I have been deſcribing. And tho the Repreſenters would have it thought that the Author of the *Growth of Deiſm*, in making the Conduct of High-Church Prieſts tend to promote Infidelity, *wounds Religion thro the ſides of its profeſs'd Servants and Followers*; yet 'tis notorious, that all the few good Men among 'em have in all times own'd as much. But ſince the deſign'd Brevity of this Diſcourſe will not give me leave to prove this by Inſtances in all Ages, I ſhall only mention the Sentiments of the *Iriſh* Clergy, and of two or three of our own Divines as to this matter. The *Iriſh* Convocation ſay, 'That the groſs Superſtition of the Church of *Rome*, which has turn'd their publick Worſhip and Adminiſtration of their Sacraments into outward Pomp and Pageantry, together with that palpable Hypocriſy of calculating many of the Doctrines of the Church for Gain, is ſo fully detected, and become ſo odious even to thoſe of their own Communion, that great numbers too eaſily run into the other Extreme, of utterly rejecting all Reveal'd Religion. This Infidelity, which took its riſe from Popiſh Countries, hath ſpread it ſelf among Proteſtants,——and is now growing dangerous to all Communities of Chriſtians.'

P. 12.

Repreſent. of the Iriſh *Conv.* p. 7.

The *Iriſh* Convocation, no doubt, are in the right in ſuppoſing that the Pomp and Pageantry of the *Romiſh* Church, together with the palpable Hypocriſy of their Prieſts, is enough to make all thinking Men of that Communion to look on Popery as mere Prieſtcraft: but that would never make them quit Chriſtianity, if they did not obſerve the ſame Prieſtcraft in other Chriſtian Churches; much leſs is that ſufficient to make Infidelity ſpread among Proteſtants, who have none of that Pomp and Pageantry: *that* can only be owing to thoſe Prieſts, who for the ſake of *Gain* draw Popiſh Concluſions from Proteſtant Premiſes, and build Popiſh Practices upon Proteſtant Principles; and thereby make their Hypocriſy more viſible than the Romiſh Prieſts do theirs.

If

If this Infidelity, which is now growing dangerous to all Communities of Christians, took its rise from those Doctrines which Priests for the sake of their separate Interest have introduc'd; ought not all Governments, which are really concern'd for the Good of Christianity as well as of their own Subjects, to do their utmost to prevent this growing Evil, and put a stop to these wicked Doctrines, notwithstanding any of their Clergy shou'd after a most Pharisaical Justification of themselves address for more Profit and Power, on pretence of preventing the Increase of Infidelity?

Tho we can't learn from Ecclesiastical Story that the main Body of the Clergy ever really design'd to remove those Corruptions they themselves had brought into Religion (as indeed there are very few but what are owing to *them*) yet sometimes they have had so much *seeming* Goodness, as to be capable of bearing Reproof; and did not call those, who complain'd of their Conduct, Atheists, Deists, *&c.* or say 'twas *wounding Religion thro the sides of its profess'd Servants and Followers.*

The Sermon that Dr. *Colet* (who was a wonderful good Man, as his Life writ by *Erasmus* plainly shews) preach'd before the Convocation in 1511. is a sort of Representation of the Religion of those Times; and he is so far from laying all the fault on the Laity, that he tells the Clergy, 'That now we 'may truly seem to say, that all which is in the 'Church is either the Lust of the Flesh, the Lust of 'the Eyes, or Pride of Life, under which he com'prehends all manner of Vices.' And he gives such an account of their excessive Wickedness of all kinds, as wou'd amaze any one who was not acquainted with Ecclesiastical History. Of their Covetousness in particular, he says, 'This abominable 'Pestilence has so enter'd into the Minds of almost 'all Priests, and hath so blinded the Eyes of their 'Understandings, that we see nothing but what 'seems to bring us some Gain. To be short, all 'Corruptness, all the Decay of the Church, all the 'Offences and Scandals of the World, come from 'the

Dr. Colet's *Sermon, printed in the 2d Volume of the* Phenix, *pag.* 4, 5.

'the Covetousness of the Priests. And from St. 'Bernard he says that there are two kinds of He-'resies, one arising from perverse Teaching, the 'other from naughty Life; of which this latter is 'far worse and more perillous, reigning now in 'Priests to the utter and miserable Destruction of 'the Church of Christ.' Tho this good Man thus expoſes the Vices of the Clergy, yet we do not find that they took any offence at his Sermon.

But the Scene was alter'd in the time of *Charles* II. for the Bishop of *Sarum* says, 'He design'd to have 'publish'd Dr. *Colet*'s Sermon, to shew the State of 'things at the beginning of the Reformation; but 'he was hinder'd by those under whose direction he 'had put his History, lest it might be thought to 'be done with a design to reflect on the present as 'well as past State of things.' *Reflections on a Book concerning the Rights of an* English *Convocation.*

Had the Bishop of *Sarum* always observ'd this Caution, he had not so provok'd the Malice of the High-Church Priests: But his Zeal for Christianity oblig'd him to assign the true Cause of Infidelity. And therefore in his Preface to his *Pastoral Care*, made for the sake of his Clergy, and publish'd in 1692. he says, 'I am forc'd to declare, that hav- P. 24, 25. 'ing much free Conversation with many fatally 'corrupted that way, they have very often own'd 'to me, that nothing promoted this so much in 'them, as the very bad Opinion which they took up 'of all Clergymen of all sides.' And then he mentions what they said of their Conduct, and particularly, 'That tho for carrying on of their own Au-'thority or Fortunes, which in one word they call'd 'their Trade, they seem'd to be very positive in 'affirming the Truth of their Doctrines; yet they 'in their own hearts did not believe it, since they 'liv'd so little suitable to it, and were so much set 'on raising themselves by it, and so little on ad-'vancing the Honour of their Profession, by an ex-'emplary Piety and a shining Conversation.'

And (speaking on an Occasion where there was more than ordinary reason to mention it) he says, 'I have since my Conversation with *Wilmot* Earl of

'*Rochester*

Bp of Sarum's *Speech at* Sacheverel's *Trial*, p. 15.

'*Rocheſter* had many occaſions to diſcourſe with People tainted with theſe wicked Principles; and I do affirm, that the greateſt prejudice theſe Perſons have at Religion, at the Clergy, and at the publick Worſhip of God, is this, That they ſay they ſee Clergymen take Oaths and uſe all Prayers both ordinary and extraordinary for the Government, and yet in their Actings and Diſcourſes, and of late in their Sermons, they ſhew viſibly that they look another way: from whence they conclude, that they are a mercenary ſort of People without Conſcience.'

Before the Revolution the like Complaints were made by the Excellent Dr. *Henry More*, who has a Section in his *Myſtery of Godlineſs*, B. 10. Ch. 2. *to ſhew that the Hypocriſy of Profeſſors fills the World with Atheiſts*: where he ſays, 'That Men are exceedingly tempted to think the whole Buſineſs of Religion is at beſt but a Plot to enrich the Prieſts and keep the People in awe, from their obſerving that they who make the greateſt noiſe about Religion, and are the moſt zealous therein, do neglect the Laws of Honeſty and common Humanity: That they can eaſily invade other Mens Right: That they can juggle, diſſemble, and lye for advantage: That they are proud, conceited, love the Applauſe of the People, are envious, fierce, and implacable, unclean and ſenſual, mercileſs and cruel, care not to have Kingdoms flow in Blood for maintaining their Tyranny over the Conſciences of poor deluded Souls.'

And ſince 'tis plain from Witneſſes above all exception, that when any of the unthinking Laity are ſtagger'd in their Faith, 'tis owing to the moſt irreligious Conduct of thoſe who make the greateſt noiſe about Religion, I ſhall therefore diſmiſs theſe Gentlemen with this moſt excellent Advice of our Bleſſed Saviour: *Thou Hypocrite! caſt out firſt the Beam out of thy own Eye; and then ſhalt thou ſee clearly to pull out the Mote that is in thy Brother's Eye.*

FINIS.